

State Level Interview Guide

Purpose of this Interview Guide

This interview guide was developed to help start conversations with contacts at state-level organizations or agencies that are potential partners for sexual violence prevention. The information gathered from these interviews is intended to be useful for the development of a comprehensive statewide plan for the prevention of sexual violence. Using this interview guide is not required by CDC, but using it (or a similar type of interview process developed in your state) should help provide information useful for your sexual violence planning process.

Thinking about Who to Interview

First identify statewide organizations and agencies that you might want to partner with on the prevention of sexual violence. Think about what organizations or agencies already do some type of prevention, and what organizations work with populations that may be at risk of sexual violence. Some examples include your state's Department of Education, State Health Agency sections (e.g. Maternal and Child Health, substance abuse, etc.) statewide coalitions and statewide organizations that work to prevent violence or to promote healthy behaviors (e.g. a state coalition for preventing teen drug and alcohol use, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters). For each agency and organization, identify a contact person to interview. This might be someone you already know or have worked with in the past, or you might have to talk with several people at the agency or organization to find out who would be the best person to interview.

How to Use this Interview Guide

This interview guide provides suggested interview questions, but do not expect to ask every question in a single interview. Choose the questions that are most relevant depending on the person you are talking with. The guide is divided into six sections:

1. Mission
2. Activities/Programs
3. Populations Served
4. Training & Technical Assistance
5. Resources
6. Potential for Working Together on Sexual Violence Prevention.

Try to include some questions from each of the sections. The questions we think may be most important from each section are in bold print. The questions in Sections E and F are the most likely to be sensitive, and should be asked toward the end of the interview, after rapport has been established.

These questions should be followed up with probes for additional information as necessary. Some questions include suggestions for following up in italics.

Getting Started in Interviews

We recommend beginning this conversation by spending some time talking about why you are interested in getting this information and how you plan to use it. It may be helpful to acknowledge that resources are limited, and to emphasize that you are looking for opportunities for two-way collaboration, since no agency can do this work alone. It is important to make it clear that information from the interview will be shared with the state planning team (in other words, they should not expect information they share to be kept confidential). The information they share will be used as part of the needs and resource assessment process, but will not be attributed to them in the plan that is developed.

Before beginning to ask questions, describe the mission and work done by your own agency or organization. This provides the person you are talking with a chance to learn about what you do and ask questions. It is a good idea to provide the definitions of sexual violence and primary prevention that you are using, and to describe the public health approach to sexual violence prevention. This is important for developing a common language and making sure that you are using words like “prevention” to mean the same thing.

Also, remember that this conversation is a “two way street.” Encourage the person you are talking with to ask any questions s/he has about your work or the agency/organization you work with. Also communicate your interest in the prevention work their organization or agency is already doing, and let them know that you value the work that they are doing. Remember that you are working to build a collaborative relationship with this person and their organization or agency!

Wrapping Up

Remember that while you are closing your discussion for the day, this is the beginning (not the end) of an ongoing conversation about sexual violence prevention. It is useful to briefly summarize the things discussed during the interview, and to identify opportunities for common work. Talk about how your organizations might be able to interact in the future. The questions in Section F in particular are aimed at generating some possible ways that your organizations could begin collaborating, and identifying possible barriers to such collaborations. This provides an opportunity for you to work together to identify some next steps to continue moving towards collaboration. Be clear about how you will address these next steps, and remember to follow through! Also, don't forget that collaboration is a “two way street” and offering support or assistance to the agency you are talking with can contribute to building a strong collaboration.

Suggested Interview Questions

A. Mission

1. **What is your agency/organization's mission?**
 - *Does this mission include prevention of sexual violence?*
 - *Does this mission include things closely related to sexual violence prevention (e.g. promoting healthy sexual behaviors)?*
2. **What connections, if any, do you see between prevention of sexual violence and your agency/organization's main mission?**
3. **How important is sexual violence prevention to addressing the main mission your agency/organization works on?**

B. Activities/Programs

1. **What sort of prevention work does your agency/organization do?**
 - *How are these activities evaluated?*
2. **Does your agency/organization have local affiliates or fund other groups to do prevention work?**
 - *What types of prevention these affiliates or groups do?*
 - *How are these activities evaluated?*

C. Populations Served

1. **What populations does your agency/organization work with?**
2. *(If the agency/organization has local affiliates or funds other groups to do prevention work)* **What populations do your affiliates/the groups that you fund work with?**
3. *Explain that risk factors for sexual violence are community and societal conditions and individual and relationship characteristics that increase the likelihood of sexual violence perpetration or victimization. It will probably be helpful to provide some examples of risk factors at the individual (e.g. alcohol/drug use, a history of sexual abuse or witnessing family violence, attitudes and beliefs supportive of sexual violence), relationship (e.g. association with peers with attitudes and beliefs supportive of sexual violence, violent or emotionally unsupportive family environment), and community levels (e.g. poverty, lack of employment opportunities, community tolerance of sexual violence, and lack of strong sanctions against perpetrators of sexual violence). Then ask:* **To what extent do you think the population your agency/organization serves is affected by these risk factors for sexual violence?**

D. Training and Technical Assistance

- 1. What kinds of training or technical assistance does your agency/organization provide to other organizations (e.g. local affiliates) on any topics relevant to sexual violence prevention?**
2. What (if any) training and technical assistance have you (or other staff in your agency/organization) received on topics relevant to the prevention of sexual violence (e.g. what is primary prevention, sexual violence primary prevention strategies, evidence-based approaches)?
- 3. Is there interest in receiving additional training or technical assistance in any of these areas within your agency/organization?**
- 4. On what topics (relevant to sexual violence prevention) do the organizations you work with need training or technical assistance that is not provided by your agency/organization?**
5. What training formats are most effective with your partners (e.g. in person conferences, teleconferences, web-based, etc.)?
6. What types of things do the groups you work with need support doing?
7. What are common questions or barriers that are addressed by training or technical assistance?

E. Resources

- 1. Are there staff members, groups, or departments within your agency/organization that focus on prevention?**
 - *If yes, as follow up questions to learn more, such as the number of people involved and what type of things they do.*
- 2. Are there any staff members, groups, or departments that focus on sexual violence?**
 - *If yes, as follow up questions to learn more, such as the number of people involved and what type of things they do.*
- 3. How much flexibility do your staff members have to collaborate on prevention projects, such as those that might be focused on sexual violence prevention (e.g. time available to participate in coalition meetings or to work on joint projects with other groups)?**
4. What proportion of your programming dollars are dedicated to prevention (vs. intervention after a problem has started)?
5. How much flexibility does your agency/organization have about how prevention funding is allocated?
6. What types of information does your data collect that you think might be relevant to sexual violence prevention? Some examples of relevant data include:
 - epidemiological data about the occurrence of sexual violence and other types of violence
 - data from evaluations of prevention programs
 - data on alcohol or substance use
 - data on mental health
 - data on sexual experiences

7. How willing/able is your agency/organization to advocate for policy change in the area of SV prevention?

F. Potential for Working Together on Sexual Violence Prevention

1. **How comfortable do you feel about working on sexual violence prevention?**
2. **What questions or concerns do you have about working on sexual violence prevention?**
3. To what extent is sexual violence prevention included in the work being done by your agency already?
4. Have you had any experience working on sexual violence prevention in this job?
5. To what extent does your agency's/organization's leadership support the prevention of sexual violence?
 - *How is this support demonstrated?*
6. To what extent is there awareness about sexual violence across your agency/organization?
7. **What opportunities do you see for how our organizations could work together?**
8. What advantages are there to your agency/organization in getting involved in the prevention of sexual violence?
9. What obstacles or barriers do you see that could prevent your agency/organization from getting involved in the prevention of sexual violence?
10. What other organizations would you suggest we talk with?